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UNCLAS RANGOON 000835

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV; PACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#) [NLD](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: NLD BASHING - THE BEAT GOES ON

REF: RANGOON 692 AND PREVIOUS

**1. SUMMARY:** Since the release of over 300 political prisoners on July 6, the GOB has detained at least 12 new political prisoners. Details of a few detentions in the first two weeks of July follow. Several were detained under a law restricting the movements of criminals. Discouraging political activities on Martyrs' Day (July 19) may be one motive for the detentions. END SUMMARY.

**2.** Although the GOB released over 300 political prisoners on July 6, authorities have continued to arrest others for their political beliefs and activities. At least 12 persons have been arrested since the beginning of July. Details of some of the cases follow:

-- July 2: Naw Ohn Hla, a suspended NLD member, was arrested. She was later released, but ordered to remain at her home 30 km north of Rangoon. She is known for leading groups of NLD supporters to Shwedagon Pagoda on Tuesdays to pray for ASSK. They often wear T-shirts that bear ASSK's portrait and say "Freedom from Fear," the title of one of her books. The authorities confiscated all of her T-shirts and other materials and warned her and her colleagues not to engage in any political activities on Martyrs' Day on July 19.

-- July 4-5: Eight NLD members from Bago Township were arrested for listening to Burmese language radio broadcasts on BBC and Radio Free Asia and then having group discussions of the news in a teashop. Five were released on July 6, but the group leader Hla Myint Than and the cafe owner U Win Myint and his wife remain in custody.

-- July 6: Dr. Win Aung, NLD Chairman of Khin Oo Township, Sagaing Division was arrested along with NLD members Soe Win Aung and Khin Maung Win. They were arrested for possessing video recordings of speeches made by ASSK while on her ill-fated tour in 2003.

-- July 12: U Chit Swe, NLD Vice-Chairman of Thanlyin Township was arrested for allegedly holding a meeting of party members. This well-known cartoonist may be charged for violating the SPDC order against holding a meeting of more than five persons without a permit. On the same day, U Myint Aye, suspended NLD Chairman of Kyimyindaing Township (Rangoon), was temporarily detained by authorities and warned not to engage in any Martyrs' Day political activities.

**3.** Several of the recent arrests have been made under Section 5(1)(F)(G) of the 1961 Restriction of Movements of Criminals Act. This law is intended to curb activities of hardened criminals by confining them to a specific location and requiring them to report to the authorities at frequent intervals.

**4. COMMENT:** Despite releasing hundreds of political prisoners earlier this month, the GOB gives no indication that it will let up on arresting new political opponents. One motive for the arrests may be to discourage shows of opposition to the GOB on Martyrs' Day, which commemorates the bombing assassination of national hero General Aung San and most of his cabinet on July 19, 1947. Given the GOB's habit of holding prisoners long beyond their terms of sentence, these detainees have no assurance that they will gain their freedom anytime soon after July 19. END COMMENT.  
Martinez